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## On the up

Improvement seen in East Village.  
Page 4

## Lake aware

Currents pose dangers to swimmers.  
Page 9

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## Sailing into Port




ALLAN REINER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum assistant curator Michelle Mason admires one of the models on display in the Pulling Into Port exhibit that will be unveiled during this long weekend's Canal Days festival. See more on Page 2

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# Canal Days focus on families at museum

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

As events take place all over Port Colborne that will draw tens of thousands of visitors during the long weekend, Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum continues to serve as the heart and soul of the Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival.

The festival began at the museum 38 years ago and it's still the place to be — especially for families, says assistant curator Michelle Mason, who has spent the past several weeks preparing for the influx of visitors.

"I find that a lot of the families that come here enjoy it so much," she says. "They have big smiles on their faces, and there's something for the parents, there's something for the kids, there's something for everybody."

Rather than just attracting history buffs, she says the museum seems to be attracting many families recently.

"It's a big family destination, they stay here for hours and learn things," Mason says.

In addition to the numerous displays, demonstrations and re-enactors that will part of the lineup of activities at the museum, she says it is introducing Niagara Mad Science shows specifically with families in mind.

"We're really pleased. It's kind of transformed itself. We're really happy with the way it's going."

The museum also plans to unveil a new exhibit, called

Pulling Into Port, as part of the annual celebration. It's a display of incredibly detailed model ships not unlike the vessels that plied the waters of the Welland Canal throughout Port Colborne's history.

"It's not quite done," Mason says as she opens the door of the climate-controlled building on the museum grounds, where the models are being displayed.

She says the display just needs a few finishing touches, such as a Port Colborne flag to highlight the community's 50th anniversary of becoming a city.

"We're going to have the grand opening at Canal Days," Mason says, adding Philip Main — a creator of two of the models on display — will be at the event for the unveiling.

"This one took him three years to do," she says gesturing to a tall ship model. "He's now working on one where you can see the inside. We're really happy to have him."

She says the museum is considering opening the doors of the climate-controlled building for the exhibit opening, so people can see the models up close and give Main a place where he can meet with visitors.

Also this weekend, local musicians will be performing at the museum including Kindred, Barley Brae, and Niagara Old Time Fiddlers; as well as students from Tara's School of Highland Dance. There will also be a giant sand castle, a display of a 1900 dory replica called The Gertrude, and presentations by Underwa-



Buffalo fire department's Edward M. Cotter fireboat is a popular stop for Canal Days visitors.

ter Archeology.

"We're really excited about Canal Days this year. We have a lot of marine activities, some new, some that have been coming here for 38 years," says Mason.

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Niagara Windriders Kitesflyers Association is a perennial Canal Days favourite, at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park.



POSTMEDIA FILE PHOTOS

## CANAL DAY AT THE MUSEUM

### Friday:

12 p.m. - museum opens  
2 p.m. - Edwardian tea served at Arabella's Tea Room

### Saturday:

11 a.m. - museum opens with remote control model boats, historic marine photograph slide show, Kid's Zone, Kid's Scavenger Hunt

11:15 a.m. - Second Regiment Lincoln Millia drill demonstration (second demonstration at 3:30 p.m.)  
Tara's School of Highland Dance performs

11:30 a.m. - Kindred performs, giant sand castle opens

11:45 a.m. - Pulling Into Port model ship exhibit opens

12 p.m. - Building a Replica presentation on building the 1900s dory called The Gertrude, story time at the museum hosted by the Port Colborne library

1 p.m. - Edwardian tea  
2 p.m. - Niagara Old Time Fiddlers perform

### Sunday:

11 a.m. - museum opens with remote control model boats, historic marine photograph slide show, Kid's Zone, Kid's Scavenger Hunt

11:15 a.m. - drill demonstration  
11:30 a.m. - Barley Brae performs, giant sand castle opens

12 p.m. - Beach Combing for treasures, story time, Building a Replica presentation

1 p.m. - Edwardian tea  
2 p.m. - Mad Science  
3 p.m. - Underwater Archeology

3:30 p.m. - drill demonstration

**Monday:**  
12 p.m. - museum opens  
2 p.m. - Edwardian tea

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# Canal Days continues to grow

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

While many community events eventually lose their appeal, the Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival is still growing by leaps and bounds.

City of Port Colborne event co-ordinator Gina Murdoch said a new economic impact study being released later this week shows attendance at the 38-year-old festival grew by more than 100,000 people from 2011 to 2015.

The study conducted by Toronto-based Enigma Research found that 410,000 people visited Port Colborne during the four-day festival last summer.

That number includes return visits during the four-day event, for a total of 228,000 unique visitors.

Those visitors spent \$6.3 million while they were in the city.

In comparison, an economic impact study Enigma conducted in 2011 said about 300,000 people visited the festival that year, including 158,000 unique visitors who spent about \$3.2 million during their visit.

The study also showed an increasing number of visitors from out of the area.

Last year, 73,000 visitors travelled more than 40 kilo-

metres to participate, compared to 52,000 from out of the area who attended the 2011 festival.

Murdoch said the study results "were very good," adding the information "really helps us" when it comes to planning future events.

"We're growing," she said. She attributed the interest in the event to a focus on giving the people what they want.

"We really do listen to what the people want and are looking for," Murdoch said.

The city surveys Canal Days visitors every year, and uses that information to make the next festival even better.

"This year we're focusing on marine," she said.

"We're bringing in Bass Pro for a live fishing demonstration, we're bringing in a sailing simulator, a fishing simulator, we're doing more marine navigation things and we're looking to bring in different types of boats."

For instance, while the Empire Sandy has been a longtime favourite at Canal Days, "now we're bringing in the Hamilton Harbour Queen, antique boats and different marine themes to keep people interested."

She said this year's festival, which received a \$51,300 Celebrate Ontario grant, will fea-



Economic impact studies show the Canal Days festival in Port Colborne continues to grow. The 38th annual event is taking place this weekend.

ture more live music with performances planned for Roselawn Centre, in addition to the concerts planned for the market square featuring Finger 11, Kim Mitchell and David Wilson.

"We extended our concerts," Murdoch said. "Saturday we have the Toronto All Star Big Band and on Sunday we're doing a Beach Boys tribute. We're expanding there, too.

We're listening to what people want."

She said there are many people working behind the scenes to keep the crowds returning year after year, including staff and volunteers at the local museum and any of the sanctioned events that are held as part of it. Without the volunteers as well as sponsorships, she said the event could not be possible.

"We do not have enough staff

to pull something of this magnitude off," she said.

Murdoch doesn't have much time to enjoy the festival, herself. She spends the civic holiday weekend at "every location and at everything listed."

"I'm anywhere and everywhere," she said.

Asked to pick a favourite event, Mason laughed and said: "That's not fair."

She did, however, suggest

newcomers to the festival start off on West Street visiting vendors and tall ships moored along the canal.

From there, she advised catching a ride on the "shuttle and stop at all the locations."

A full list of those locations is online at [http://portcolborne.ca/page/canal\\_days](http://portcolborne.ca/page/canal_days).

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# Toddler rescued from locked car

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

A Port Colborne toddler was rescued unharmed from a car after being unintentionally locked inside the vehicle, as temperatures rose above 30°C last Thurs-

day afternoon.

Niagara Regional Police spokesman Const. Phil Gavin said a mother who is not being identified was exiting her car at Vale Health and Wellness Centre on Elizabeth Street at about 4 p.m., and closed the vehicle door leav-

ing her keys and three-year-old child inside.

"She immediately realized her keys were left in the car. The car doors were locked," Gavin said.

The woman immediately requested assistance, and police and Port Colborne fire-

fighters arrived at the athletic centre at about 4:12 p.m.

CAA was called to the scene and unlocked the car within about 15 minutes after the child was locked inside.

Gavin said the "child was assessed and was fine."

As temperatures have climbed recently, Gavin has posted social media reminders about leaving children and pets in parked vehicles.

"Going to be a hot one today in @NiagaraRegion. Park smart, no hot kids or pets. Stay hydrated," he wrote

on Twitter, last Thursday. But in this case, he said the incident was unintentional, and the mother acted promptly and appropriately for the welfare of her child.

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# Wage fighting for neighbourhood

**BILL SAWCHUK**  
Postmedia Network

The fight to improve life in the hardscrabble East Village of Port Colborne is tough going, but being won with small victories, the Niagara police services board heard last Thursday.

Criminal activity involving drugs, theft and violent interactions has been commonplace in the area, which is made up of about 250 homes and bounded the canal, Lake Erie, the former Inco refinery and the Canadian National Railway right of way.

"It is getting better," said Neal Schoen of the East Village Neighbourhood Improvement Task Force.

"I am getting comments that this summer has been much better. Last summer was the season of discontent. It was really bad on the street. People were just walking up and stealing things and walking away with them in front of the owners. That has slowed down tremendously."

The one-time mayor detailed how the committee has been working with the police and the city to improve life in the neighbourhood.

The improvements can't come soon enough for east-side resident Monika Borge, who told the board first

hand about the problems she and her husband have experienced in the area.

She said after a disagreement with a drug dealer, fishing line was strung across the bottom of her staircase as a trip wire. She said she is afraid to go outside at night.

"It was 11 p.m. the other night, and there were other people outside yelling and threatening to shoot someone. I don't know what to do anymore."

Niagara Regional Police Staff Sgt. Chris Healey, who is in charge of Port Colborne detachment, encouraged residents to continue contact police.

The police board was listening to the comments as part of its regular board meeting, which was being held in Port Colborne.

It was the first time the board members had ventured out of their regular meeting space in St. Catharines for an official meeting.

The decision to hold the meeting in Port Colborne is part of an ongoing effort, which will see them hold meeting meetings in other communities "based on events," said board chair Bob Gale.

"The board wants people in all the communities to know we serve them, and we are aware that not everyone



The former Walls store is shown in Port Colborne's East Village, where positive change is slowly emerging.

ALLAN BENNETT/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

can make it to St. Catharines or Niagara Falls."

Schoen said the timing of the police board meeting in Port Colborne was perfect for the East Village task force.

"We have been working on this, and they were coming here," he said. "It couldn't have worked out better. There is still tons of work to be done, but we are starting

to build some momentum."

Schoen said the task force was at the meeting to thank the police for their efforts, and remind them that while progress has been made, there are still real problems.

"We know that a lot of it has to do with social, economic issues," he said. "The housing stock isn't the best. It is historically next to an industrial area and police

resources are limited.

"Many people are upgrading their homes, but some buildings aren't being upgraded. The owners of those properties don't seem to care, and their neighbours are hurting."

"We are asking the police for a bit more enforcement and a bit more visibility."

He said increased foot and bike patrols can make a big

difference.

"When that happens, the bad guys will stay inside," Schoen said. "At least that makes the street safer. Kids will be out on their bikes and playing outside. That doesn't happen when parents are worried, and people are afraid to let them go outside as the sun goes down."

bsawchuk@postmedia.ca

## Bus tours to boost Port tourism

**MICHELLE ALLENGER**  
Postmedia Network

Even with the increase in tourism Andrea Botor, tour co-ordinator with Explore Port Colborne, would like to see more people visit the city.

With the collaboration of the municipality, the Main Street Business Improvement Area and the Downtown Port Colborne BIA, Botor hopes to attract motor coach tours.

"All three have partnered together and that really is a wonderful thing. Instead of everyone kind of doing their own thing, to be able to come together and work towards a common goal."

Tourism in Port Colborne has been on the rise in recent years, but the city and local Business Improvement Associations want to welcome even more tour-

ists.

Evan Acs, economic development officer with the city, said there isn't a way to track how many visitors Port Colborne has, but the city does keep track of how many people stop at the visitor information centre. He said it gives city staff an idea of how many people visit.

Since May there have been about 1,050 people, that is an increase from last year's 880 visitors. Acs said in 2014 there were only 770.

"This is one of the best seasons in the past few years for tourism," Acs said via email.

Botor said Port Colborne is a unique place with different areas that offer people a little bit of everything. She said people can enjoy the marina, theatre and antique shops.

"West Street gets a lot of

the attention, and rightly so. There is a lot to offer on West Street. But I think that by marketing the entire city as a destination, you are able to really show we are a jewel in the region."

Explore Port Colborne will market to motor coach companies within a two-hour radius of Port Colborne, including the U.S. The focus will be on tour operators that do day trips, so people can do a short trip to see what the city has to offer.

"We are going to hopefully pitch to multi-day tour operators who do visit Niagara Falls. Can we steal you for a day, a half a day? Come stop here, come have lunch," she said.

Botor said the city isn't trying to compete with Niagara Falls, instead she is hoping tour operators can add Port Colborne as a stop



MICHELLE ALLENGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Andrea Botor, group tour co-ordinator with Explore Port Colborne, is eager to bring motor tour operators to Port Colborne to showcase what the city has to offer.

during the trip.

Botor said if the city and BIAs are successful con-

vincing tour operators to visit Port Colborne the tours would be up and running

2017 or 2018.

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**P POSTMEDIA**

## I've been thinking about knowing God

**PASTOR GARY TOMICK**

Wainfleet Christian Congregation Church

Two of the most popular Christian books of the last few decades are *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer and *Basic Christianity* by John Stott. I would say knowing God is basic Christianity.

There can be no Christianity without first knowing God. We can never uproot the basics of our faith whose foundation stands firm, but we do build upon what we press on to maturity.

Christians have one eye in the past and as spiritual geologists they spelunking retrieving and recovering priceless truths from the past.

The writings of the reformers, the puritans, and others are important for renewal today, and of course the Bible itself is more valuable than silver, gold or any other precious thing.

None of these treasures are hidden in caves nor guarded by

cyclops or dragons. The Bible is an ancient book fully inspired by the most ancient of days and as such both it and God are the same yesterday, today and forever. As preachers look to the future, they can faithfully and relevantly relate the unchanging Word to the ever changing world.

You cannot know God without first knowing what His word says for in it alone are found the will, the ways, and the wonders of God. There is a monumental difference between knowing facts about God and knowing God intimately and experientially. The former while important (we all need intellectual content) is lacking if it does not enter the heart becoming part of us.

In other words, with both head and heart engaged, the end result will lead to Doxology — praise to God. For knowledge solely as a means to an end puffs up, but love builds up (1 Corinthians 8:1).

This same apostle Paul who wrote in Philippians chapter 3 verse 10 wanted to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings. The apostle had a great mind; he studied under the great rabbi Gamaliel, he was more than a brain on a stick. It was predicted that Saul soon to become Paul would suffer acutely. The Lord said in Acts 9:16, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

This was fulfilled in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 — for suffering he surely experienced. And I can only mention a few things this mighty apostle not only endured, but even boasted about with respect to his sufferings.

Part of this lany in 1 Corinthians mentions that Paul was in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, exposed to death again and again. Three

times he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned, three times he was shipwrecked and spent a night and a day in the open sea. So if suffering is an accurate barometer in knowing God then Paul knew Him quite well.

What good is suffering? It helps us to identify with others by offering them the same comfort we have received from the Holy Spirit.

What good is suffering? It burns off the impurities in our lives and as we go through the furnace of affliction, the divine silversmith will more clearly see His image in us.

What good is suffering? It produces endurance "Consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance," (James 1 versus 1 and 2).

What good is suffering? Suffering sets and example

for believers. If the apostle Paul in prison, so often as He was for the gospel, could still preach and glorify God in such dire consequences and difficult situations other believers could do likewise under far less severe trials.

What good is suffering? It also benefits unbelievers. Paul and Silas were severely flogged, thrown in prison, fastened in stocks, on at least one occasion. What was there response? "About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God," (Acts 16:30). Then the jailer cried out "what must I do to be saved?"

The answer is found in verse 31 — "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

You better believe they had the attention of everyone while praising God in this difficult situation. For Christians not only

live well, but they can also suffer well and even die well.

How can you know God? It is only in and through Christ who came to reveal Himself. For Jesus said, if you have seen me you have seen the Father.

We like to cherry-pick portions of Philippians 3:10.

Many people want to know Christ, they long to experience the power of His resurrection, but tend to nodd at the last part of this verse which reads: "In the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings."

And who suffered more than Christ? Yet He rose from the dead and He gives His spirit to those who repent and receive Him by Faith. And that is the best of both worlds. His strength and comfort in our "midnight hour." Eternal joy in glory later found only in knowing God through Christ.

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# The sad fate of the police board survey



GRANT  
LAFLECHE

Charge up your Flux Capacitor and come with me, dear reader, for a journey back through the log of time.

Sadly, we aren't going back to the Enchantment Under the Sea dance, but a short trip to about a year ago, to when the Niagara Regional Police services board proudly unveiled its online public survey, touted as a key informational tool to build its three-year plan.

The board paid \$42,500 of public money to DPM Consulting, owned by Carmen D'Angelo, chairman of Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, to conduct public consultation for the business plan. The service portion of that fee was \$25,000.

In hiring DPM — through an untendered process, by the bye — the board broke with past practice of having the NRP's in-house statistical analysis expert to conduct the survey. It didn't want the service doing a survey about itself, it said.

More than that, board chairman Bob Gale didn't want a survey that asked "vanilla questions" and produced "vanilla answers." So DPM's survey was going to

play some serious hardball, we were told.

The survey itself was an unmitigated disaster. It featured so many crippling methodological problems not even Doc Brown could travel back and fix them.

The survey itself was created using an online service called Survey Monkey, which allows you to build a survey for free, although you have to pay a nominal fee for bells and whistles if you want to use them. The service also crunches the data for you.

The anonymous survey asked leading questions; presumed knowledge participants could not possibly have and even featured answers that didn't fit the questions.

For instance, the survey asks "Do you believe the Niagara Regional Police Service provides adequate general patrol across the region of Niagara?" Possible answers range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The problem should be immediately evident. The question is a yes or no question, rather than a statement that you can agree or disagree with. That might seem trivial, but the error effectively shoots the survey in the foot.

The most glaring problem, however, was anyone could take the survey multiple times.

D'Angelo asserted the board he would fill out duplicate IP addresses, but that wasn't the issue.

A child can figure out how to change the IP address of a computer in moments, meaning the same person can do the survey from the same computer multiple times, tricking the system into thinking the responses are coming from different people.

I took the survey a dozen times myself. Board member Vaughn Stewart took the survey a whopping 22 times, changing his computer's IP address each time. Stewart asked D'Angelo if he was able to find and eliminate those IP addresses. If he could, confidence in the survey would be restored.

Citing privacy issues, DPM didn't answer the question. That excuse made little sense given that Vaughn was asking for his own computer's ID numbers, not anyone else's.

Needless to say, these shortfalls invalidate the survey results.

Not that board was willing to admit it was responsible for a colossal, \$25,000 blunder that cannot be used to chart any future course for the NRP. The board stubbornly refused to acknowledge its failure, with one member labelling the survey a "home run."

Continued on page A7

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# Police board survey falls short on its promise

Continued from page A6

(To borrow from Inigo Montoya, I don't think that term means what some board members think it means.)

If we leap forward in time to return to the present and look at the recently released NRP business plan, what role does the survey appear to play?

Almost none, thankfully. The board relegated its vaunted survey to a single page in the 62-page document. Completely absent are the questions about merging all of Niagara's emergency services communication centres — Gale's long-standing political hobby horse — the public's opinion of the size of the NRP budget, street checks and other issues.

(The full results are not included in the business plan, but I have attached

the full document in all its Survey Monkey glory to the online version of this column.)

Also noticeably absent from the business plan is the survey's purported sample size and margin of error, information typically included in any presentation of survey results. (For the curious, the survey claims 2,089 respondents, although no indication of how many are undetected duplicates, or responses by NRP officers, staff or board members. It also claims a margin of error of +/- 2.14, which the catastrophic methodological issues renders irrelevant.)

All that is left are four bullet points, citing numbers indicating a high level of public satisfaction with the NRP, and that drug crime is the most pressing criminal concern for Niagara resi-

dents.

On Wednesday I spoke to Stewart, the chairman of the business plan steering committee, who said the survey was assessed "within its context" when the business plan was created, meaning the DPM survey was given much less weight than a

properly constructed one would have.

Stewart pointed out that other elements of the public consultation process, including direct interviews with community leaders, were still relevant. The rest, though, not so much.

There is no other way to

interpret this as anything other than a board-created fiasco.

Policing is a complex issue. Knowing how the public regards our police service, and the costs to operate it is useful information. In this regard, however, the NRP is not doing blind.

The survey represents a lost opportunity, a careless waste of public dollars, and failure of political leadership for which the entire Niagara community, and the thin blue line that serves it, is owed an apology.

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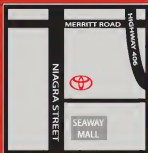
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# Rip currents dangerous for swimmers

LAURA BARTON  
Postmedia Network

Having a lake nearby is a great opportunity to get out in the water and have some fun, but it also presents some dangers.

Rip currents are channels of water that form when waves are coming in toward the shore and when the waves break against the shore, the water tries to find a way back out.

"Water will follow the path of least resistance," said Sgt. Bill Wiley with the Niagara Regional Police marine and underwater search and rescue units.

Considering the region's proximity to the lakes, he said rip currents definitely happen in this area.

Last Monday there was an incident on Lake Erie near Augustine Beach in Wainfleet in which a kiteboarder saved a woman who was dragged away from shore by a current.

The kiteboarder, Mark Bowser, described the woman as exhausted when



ALLAN BENNETT/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Lake Erie's waters were tumultuous in Wainfleet last Monday, perfect conditions for a rip current to form.

he rescued her.

Wiley said people's first instinct is to fight against the current and try to get back to shore.

Tyler Ryersee, commanding officer of the Port Weller search and rescue station with the Canadian Coast Guard, said "when you're

swimming as hard as you can back to shore, you become exhausted."

Continued on page A11

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## Reports of lockdown in Welland schools 'nonsense': police

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

Niagara Regional Police say reports of lockdowns at two Welland schools last Friday because of a shooting are unfounded.

"It's all nonsense," said Niagara Regional Police Staff Sgt. Jon Picton. He said the false reports that picked up momentum on social media websites stem from a minor incident that occurred in the morning at the Welland Civic Square.

"It was about 9:30 a.m. A teenager walked into the back of city hall and he had a pellet gun," Picton said.

"He didn't do anything. He was told to leave and he left."

He said the teenager was last seen walking across the Main Street Bridge. Although police tried to locate the teenager, he was no

where to be found.

"There was never a shooting, there was never a lockdown, there was none of that," Picton said.

But somehow, the story escalated into reports about lockdowns at Notre Dame and Eastdale secondary schools, where summer programs were being held.

After stories started appearing on social media websites, Picton said his phone started ringing off the hook.

"We've been talking to people on the phone all day — summer camps and principals, and everybody."

He said he asked the NRP's communications officer to issue a statement saying the reports are unfounded.

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# Don't fight the current

Continued from page A9

Ryerse said there's a difference between a rip current and a rip tide. A rip current happens in bodies of water, such as lakes, but riptides happen in the ocean where there is a tidal effect.

A rip current, he said, happens on windy days on the lake, typically around sand bars and piers.

The current flows at a 90 degree angle to the shore and is usually pretty noticeable.

Unlike an undertow, rip currents happen on the surface of the water and don't drag people under.

"They're not capable of pulling you under water," Ryerse said. "It's a surface current."

Both Wiley and Ryerse recommend if anyone gets caught in a rip current to call for help and either relax and float along the current or swim parallel to the shore. Because the current is a straight stream of water, swimming sideways out of it should work.

Wiley said even the fastest and strongest swimmers are no match against the current. Weaker swimmers is where it becomes especially problematic, though.

"If you have weak swimmers or people who are tiring in trying to fight it, that can lead to drowning," he said.

With the NRP, Wiley said they usually have to deal with the end result of people fighting the current.

"What we unfortunately encounter

is the aftermath of these situations when a person has drowned and we have to go out and look for them," he said.

Both he and Ryerse agree that personal flotation devices are essential for weaker swimmers and children.

Wiley said windy days are just not ideal for lake swimming, but Ryerse said if you do decide to go, you shouldn't go alone and always let someone know where you are.

Ryerse said the coast guard can be reached by dialing star 16.

barton@postmedia.com

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- Swim out of the current, then to shore.
- If you can't escape, lie on your back and let the current take you.
- If you need help, call or wave for assistance.

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# Anti-poverty leaders praise new child benefit

DON FRASER

Postmedia Network

Elisabeth Zimmermann is cheering a federal plan and its potential to combat Niagara poverty.

A new Canada Child Benefit, aimed at raising hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty, is a massive accomplishment, she said.

"This is so good — it is really huge," said Zimmermann, executive director of YWCA Niagara Region and an anti-poverty advocate. "This is going to really help support families living on social assistance to be closer to getting above the poverty line."

"So I think it's really amazing that they," she said. "Otherwise it would have been to no positive benefit if it had just been clawed back."

"I'm glad to see this come through."

The non-taxable, income-tested child benefit that rolled out last Wednesday means an average family will receive about \$2,300 in a program that was key to the Liberals' campaign platform.

The Liberals said the benefit will cut the child poverty rate in Canada to 6.7 per cent from 11.2 per cent, by this time next year.

Federal officials said as a result, an estimated nearly 300,000 children and 200,000 adults will have their family income rise to above the low-income cutoff.

The single benefit replaces

a system that required parents to apply for the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement, and taxed monthly universal child care benefit payments.

Canada's finance department has said 3.3 million out of 3.8 million Canadian families will receive more under the new program.

The benefit won't count as income and count against a tax return next year, and be taxed like the previous universal child care benefit.

Provinces have also said they won't include the money when calculating income-tested benefits. Eligible Canadian families with child under 18 will receive their first Canada Child Benefit cheque this month.

It will provide a maximum annual benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six and up to \$4,400 per child aged six through 17.

Families with a net income of less than \$30,000 get the full benefit of \$533 a month for a child under six and \$450 a month for children aged six to 17.

Benefit levels drop as income rises.

Glen Walker, chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, called the federal plan "a great announcement for us."

"The advantage is a lot more people who are living in poverty are going to benefit. It will drive more people out of that poverty."

Walker said complementary moves have also hap-

pened at the provincial level, with changes to tax exemptions in some benefits paid to families. At the federal and provincial levels "we're really seeing efforts to put resources in the hands of very needy children and families," he said. "It's only going to help our families living (in poverty) and struggling in Niagara."

The effects will be far-reaching, he said, and that includes driving up economic prosperity locally.

"These families are going to be going out, buying local and using this for direct purchases of goods and services."

Meanwhile, as many as 6,000 people and families are part of the client list at Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold, which operates food banks and provides other services for the local poor.

Its CEO, Betty-Lou Souter, sees these people on the fringes being helped by the plan. Still, Souter is cautious in her praise about the new plan.

"The devil is always in the details," Souter said. "So we'll just have to see how it goes."

With people in abject poverty, who struggle to survive every day, a focus is on the "bottom-line impact to their budgets," she said.

"Whatever that net gain ... is more than what they had the day before," Souter said. "And it's certainly the next step in the process to get them to where they have to be."

While there are hopes the extra cash will help families save for their children's education "when you can keep the lights on and food on the table, it's a challenge to think of putting money away, when basic survival is foremost on your mind," Souter said.

"However, I commend their creative approach to get people to get people to the next level."

Some criticism has been levelled by Canada's federal opposition parties on the plan.

In a Conservative Party of Canada statement last week, MP Karen Vecchio, official opposition critic for families, children and social development, said "far too many families are learning today that they are not going to get the financial support they need when it matters the most."

Vecchio said that's because the Canada Child Benefit — unlike the Universal Child Care Benefit which provided stable support to all families — is based on your previous year's income.

"Canadians who have been laid off in the last six months or had their hours reduced won't qualify for the maximum benefit this year, regardless of the fact that their families are struggling to make ends meet," said Vecchio's release.

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— with files from  
The Canadian Press

## What St. Catharines' MP says

Poverty has had an indelible impact on Niagara, says St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle. And that's why a federal child benefit was close to his heart while campaigning on that key Liberal platform during the last federal election.

"This is a generational change in terms of changes to government benefits," said Bittle in an interview. "It's going to have a huge impact in Niagara."

Bittle said the goal of the new plan is to make things "simpler, more generous, tax free."

"At the end of the day ... the goal is to reduce child poverty in Canada by 40 per cent."

Bittle recalled being allowed to speak during his first day in the House of Commons. He rose and spoke about child poverty in St. Catharines — he'd recently read an article in *The Standard* that 24 per cent of its children were living below the poverty line.

"It is unacceptable," he said.

To that end, the new plan "is going to have a significant, dramatic effect on poverty rates in Niagara," Bittle said.

He said the benefit will also go to families making less than \$15,000 a year. "These are people that are going to spend money on their families," he said.

"The money is going to go back into the economy, and this is going to do well for the local and national economy,"



Bittle



Walker



Zimmermann



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# Moratorium on hospital cuts?



Welland hospital.

FILE PHOTO

**ALLAN BENNER**  
Postmedia Network

In addition to learning that no decisions have been made regarding a new south Niagara hospital, Welland MPP Cindy Forster says south Niagara communities also have a commitment from Ontario's health minister that no further cuts to services will be implemented until the planning process is complete.

The provincial government, along with the Local Health Integration Network, are currently at Phase 1B of a five-phase planning process, she said.

Forster joined mayors Frank Campion from Welland, John Maloney from Port Colborne and April Jeffs from Wainfleet for a July 13 meeting with Health Minister Eric Hoskins.

Describing the meeting as "a team effort to try and turn the ship around, a bit," Forster said a major course correction was

the commitment from the minister regarding the immediate future of local Niagara Health System hospitals.

"The minister made it clear that there should not be any cuts to any services at any of the hospital sites during this planning process," she said. "He made that very clear and he indicated to his staff that they needed to follow up with the NHS to make sure that isn't happening."

She said that commitment could end concerns about incremental service cuts at south Niagara hospitals.

"You know, little things here and there," Forster said, adding Hoskins asked her and the mayors to "keep on top of that and let the ministry know."

"He opened it up to the mayors to talk directly to the Ministry of Health and for me to talk directly to him when these issues come to light. I was glad he gave them a clear directive on that issue because we continue to see erosion, right."

Statements from local mayors saying Hoskins told them no decision has been made regarding a new south Niagara hospital, published last Thursday, prompted Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates to write a letter to the health minister asking him to clarify the comments.

"Based on the announcements made by the premier, my discussions with the ministry as well as the leadership of the Niagara Health System we were under the impression that the project, though in an early stage, was confirmed and would be completed. I am writing to you to ask if this has changed or if the people of Niagara can still expect a new Niagara Falls hospital," Gates wrote in the letter that was also sent to local newspapers.

But Forster, Gates' NDP colleague, said Hoskins repeated his statement several times during the meeting.

Continued on page A25

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# Track feature goes down to the wire

**BERND FRANKE**  
Postmedia Network

Third time proved to be the charm for Cody McPherson in Sunday night's sportsman feature at New Humberstone Speedway.

His third lead in the 25-lap main event gave the St. Catharines driver his third win of the season at the Port Colborne track, but the victory was anything but easy. A back-and-forth battle with current points leader Brad Rouse, also from St. Catharines, went down to the wire.

McPherson, who had short-lived lead seven laps into the race, overtook Rouse on Lap 15 only to cede the front-running position to Rouse two laps later. McPherson regained the lead - for good, as it would turn out - with three laps remaining and hold off Rouse for the win.

Rouse, also a three-time winner at Humberstone this year, came into the weekend leading McPherson 540-528 in the points race.

Justin Sharp, coming off

King of the Crates series win the night before at Merrittville, Luke Carleton and Jay Mallory rounded out the top five, while Chris Storm, Matt Sharpe and Rouse led their qualifying heats.

Also posting his third victory of 2016 at Humberstone was Welland's Craig Vasic in pro 4 trucks. He overtook copole sitters Frank Perry and Jamie Ayers heading into the second lap of the 15-lapper and in the late going pulled away from points leader Dillon Lord and Andy Imbeault for the convincing win.

Imbeault and Lord were the heat winners. Danny Wurster and Mike Toovey also had top-five finishes.

Port Colborne's Rob Goulding and Welland's Leroy Buscumb, the past two mini stock track champions at Merrittville, finished 1-2 in Sunday night's 4-cylinder feature in Port Colborne. Goulding, who also took the division title last year at Humberstone, overtook Buscumb with five laps to go and held on for the win despite losing ground on a

restart with two laps remaining.

Olivier Larocque, Kyle Haynes and Garnet rounded out the top five, with first-place finishes in the heats going to Jason Coutts and Evan Curtis.

Like the sportsman feature, the main event in street stock was highlighted by two front runners changing positions. Port Colborne's Jason Fontaine, the reigning points champion, went underneath Hagersville's Dave Bailey to take over the lead on Lap 12, only to lose it two laps later.

Fontaine used a lapped car to his advantage to regain the lead 17 laps in, but Bailey made the most of a red flag restart after Brandon Murrell's engine caught fire to power past Fontaine and Murray to earn the win.

Bill Bleich Jr., Bryce Richardson and Kyle Peltz also finished in the top five. Brad Sheehan and Bailey were the heat winners.

About 90 competitors were pitted for a five-division program highlighted by the Go Nuclear Late Model

Tour's visit to Port Colborne. Brandon Mowat of Brighton, Ont., near Belleville, outraced Dennis Lunger Jr., Humberstone's current points leader and defending champion, for his career win.

Charlie Sandercock, Sam Pennacchio of Niagara Falls

and A.J. Kingsley joined the front runners in the top five. Heat winners were Phil Potts, Kyle Sopaz and Mowat.

Humberstone is back in action next weekend with the All-Canadian Championships feature extra distance and more prize money

in each class. Highlights include a Duel in the Dirt series race in street stocks and competition in the vintage car class.

Gates open at 4:30 p.m. with racing getting underway two hours later.

[Bfranke@postmedia.com](mailto:Bfranke@postmedia.com)

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# Niagara getting ready to be set for GO

MARYANNE FIRTH  
Postmedia Network

Local work remains on track to support GO Transit's arrival to Niagara.

Following a provincial announcement last month that daily commuter rail service will reach the area by 2021, regional staff remain focused on plans for station construction and surrounding development.

Niagara Region's planning and development committee received an update last Wednesday on the GO hub and transit stations study, which has been underway since January.

The province has committed to bringing GO to Grimsby by 2021, expanding through to St. Catharines and Niagara Falls by 2023. The rail expansion project will include construction of a new station at Casablanca Boulevard in Grimsby, as well as upgrades to existing train stations in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

Those retrofits will begin as soon as next summer.

The Region's study, costing \$712,000 and set to be finished in 15 months, will result in creation of preferred concepts for the three proposed GO stations, as well as an additional station on Ontario Street in Beamsville.

It will also include secondary plans for lands in and around the stations, a transportation analysis and market analysis to determine potential area development.

The first of six phases has been completed, with context and review of the study finished in June, said Diana Morreale, the Region's manager of community planning.

The second phase will include work on the visions for the transit hub and stations, will review best practices and look at future demand and capacity.

It will also include details such as connectivity needs, parking needs and costing of related capital projects, in

addition to an implementation plan.

Public consultation meetings were held in the four municipalities with stations at the end of June, but only a handful of people attended each.

Future engagement sessions will take place when the draft secondary plans are available in late fall, Morreale said, adding the project team is aware the turnout was not ideal.

In Grimsby, residents recommended the station's height should preserve views of the waterfront and escarpment. Concerns were also raised that part of the structure will be within the green belt, which may threaten the woodlot and natural corridors nearby, planner Denise Landry said. "The group suggested that buffers be used around the station to protect the features."

Suggestions were made in the other communities about restricting the height of the stations, ensuring transit connectivity and improv-

ing the streetscapes in surrounding areas.

West Lincoln Mayor Doug Joyner called it "vital" that focus be placed on how people get to and from the stations. In addition to the creation of an inter-municipal transit system, that should also include a closer look at road infrastructure en route and additional parking opportunities in other areas with busing to the station, he said.

"I think we need to be cognizant we're going to really create some traffic jams in the local area around there."

Staff are reaching out the Metrolinx to determine how to move the process forward and to discuss who will be responsible for completing different project components, acting chief administrative officer Mo Lewis said.

If the Region completes some of the work Metrolinx had initially expected to take on, there may be some leveraging opportunities to bring the service to Niagara sooner, he added.



Doug Joyner

With the province leaving the door open for improvements within the timeline, Regional Chairman Alan Caslin called it important that the Region continue its advocacy, taking down any

potential barriers and doing what it can to "help the project move forward faster if at all possible."

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# University study to shed light on youth risk taking

DON FRASER  
Postmedia Network

The behaviour of adolescents can be troubling.

In some cases that behaviour can lead to harmful risk taking, drinking behind the wheel or sexual misadventure.

A lot of research has gone into impulses and reward-seeking in kids, and now a Brock University team is taking it much further.

Recently, it has been awarded a \$1.43-million grant for research into a more profound understanding of that risk-taking.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding covers five years of study on the development of brain mechanisms that increase motivation to seek rewards, and hold back impulses.

The large study will focus on what happens to adolescents' brains when facing risky temptations, including situations where they're fired-up with friends.

Sixteen researchers are involved in the work — including Brock and McMaster University and in The Netherlands and the U.S.

"Everyone has an area of strength that will come into play in this study," said Teena Willoughby, co-director of Brock University's centre for lifespan development and research team leader. "It's quite a large study and hopefully we can get a more holistic view of adolescent risk taking."

Willoughby said Brock has a number of researchers interested in adolescent development, and in particular in risk taking.

While the question of why adolescents engage in risk taking is well researched, another angle is emerging — brain development and activity that can be researched through brain-image and analysis machines such as MRIs and EEGs.

A new theory also suggests different areas in the brain may play a role in risk-taking development.

Continued on page A21



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Teena Willoughby, co-director of Brock University's centre for lifespan development and research team leader.

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# Exhibition ambassador to compete for CNE crown

**ALISON LANGLEY**  
Postmedia Network

Breeann Wiley hopes to bridge the gap between rural and urban communities.

"When you think about it,

everything comes from farming," the 18-year-old said. "We need people to be aware of the situations happening around farming."

The Westlane Secondary School grad was crowned the

2015-16 senior ambassador at the Niagara Regional Exhibition in Welland last September.

That crown means she'll represent Niagara's Regional Agricultural Society at the upcoming Ambassador of Fairs competi-

tion at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Celebrating its 45th anniversary, the event will take place Aug. 19 to 21 in Toronto.

Wiley will compete against close to 80 young people, all top

winners of their own local fair competitions, in hopes of being named the 2016 CNE Ambassador of the Fairs.

"The contestants will be judged on public speaking, their extra curricular activities and work in their respective communities and knowledge of agricultural issues."

"This year-long title will take the winner across the province to promote, educate and inform the public on Canadian agriculture."

Since its inception in 1971, more than 3,000 young people from 100 communities have taken part in the contest.

Wiley, a member of the Niagara 4-H Association in Wainfleet, entered the Niagara Regional Exhibition at the suggestion of a friend who is former ambassador.

"I thought it would be something fun and exciting to do," said Wiley, who will attend Trillium College in the fall.



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The Works	\$18.20
Bruschetta Pizza	\$13.75
Buffalo Wing Pizza	\$15.75
Chicken BBQ Pizza	\$15.75
Greek Pizza	\$16.25
Extra Items	\$0.75
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<b>LARGE (14")</b>	
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Plus 2 Items	\$14.15
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Plus 4 Items	\$16.15
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The Works	\$20.70
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Plus 4 Items	\$24.90
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Plus 6 Items	\$28.90
The Works	\$33.70
Bruschetta Pizza	\$21.19
Buffalo Wing Pizza	\$24.74
Chicken BBQ Pizza	\$24.74
Greek Pizza	\$26.74
Extra Items	\$2.00
Plus Tax	

## COMBOS

<b>PIZZA &amp; WINGS</b>	
Medium Pizza with 3 Toppings	\$19.49
- and 12 Chicken Wings	\$23.99
- and 24 Chicken Wings	\$23.99
Large Pizza with 3 Toppings	\$22.49
- and 12 Chicken Wings	\$26.49
- and 24 Chicken Wings	\$30.49
- and 36 Chicken Wings	\$33.99
<b>PARTY TRAY PIZZA with 3 Toppings</b>	
- and 12 Chicken Wings	\$29.24
- and 24 Chicken Wings	\$33.24
- and 36 Chicken Wings	\$37.24
- and 48 Chicken Wings	\$41.24
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<b>BUFFALO WING</b>	
Chicken in wing sauce of choice on a blue cheese spread. Topped with dried celery.	
<b>CHICKEN BBQ</b>	
Chicken in barbecue sauce on a red pizza sauce spread with a hint of dried red onion.	
<b>GREEK</b>	
Pizza topped with spinach, tomato, black olives, and feta on a garlic spread.	
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## PORT COLBORNE

## Nickel Street Storm Outfall Class Environmental Assessment Notice of Study Commencement

**The Study**  
The City of Port Colborne is undertaking the detailed design for the replacement of the Nickel Street drainage area storm sewer system as well as a Class Environmental Assessment for the preferred type and location of storm sewer outfall that will form the endpoint for this system.



This project is being planned under Schedule B of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011 & 2015), which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act.

For further information about this project and/or to submit comments, please contact:

**Chris Lee**  
Manager of Projects & Design  
Engineering Department  
City of Port Colborne  
66 Charlotte Street  
Port Colborne, ON L3K 3C8  
905-835-2900 ext. 223  
E-mail: nickelstorm@portcolborne.ca

Public input and comment are invited for incorporation into the planning and design of the project, and will be received until September 21, 2016. Subject to the identification of a preferred storm outfall location and necessary approvals, the City of Port Colborne intends to proceed with the planning, design and construction of this project, to be completed by late 2017.

This Notice issued July 21, 2016

**Ron Hanson, C.E.T.**  
Director of Engineering & Operations  
City of Port Colborne

Under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Environmental Assessment Act, unless otherwise stated in the submission, any personal information such as name, address, telephone number and property location included in a submission will become part of the public record files for this matter and may be released, if requested, to any person.

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# Researching youth's risky behaviour

Continued from page A19

Sensation and novelty-seeking can develop early, creating heightened sensation seeking at that age, Willoughby said. However, the pre-frontal cortex, that can put the brakes on that behaviour, may be lagging behind. That's especially so when kids are with friends and weathering peer pressure.

Willoughby said while a number of studies have been done in this general area, most have been lab-based and less to the real world and what youth do at home.

"And none of them have looked at it over time," she said, adding that's because that level of research is expensive and tough to do.

To that end, researchers involved in the study plan to monitor the development, over five years, of at least 600 boys and girls ages eight to 13.

Subjects will fill out annual self-report surveys and do various lab tasks, shedding additional light on brain development theory.

Willoughby said the research is very complex, with other variables at play including the context of risk-taking incidents, environment and personality. Physical fitness will also be monitored.

Among the issues to be probed are whether brain changes lead to risk behaviours, and whether



**Everyone has an area of strength that will come into play in this study. It's quite a large study and hopefully we can get a more holistic view of adolescent risk taking."**

Teena Willoughby, co-director of Brock University's centre for lifespan development and research team leader.

being involved in sports or clubs boosts impulse control.

The team will also be working with partners that fold in the United Nations Children's Fund, Mental Health Commission of Canada, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Niagara Region's public health department.

It's hoped the research will begin this fall.

Periodic results and data gleaned from the ongoing research will also be released.

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Jaxon & Jayce's mother, Angela

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## Lasting memories shared

Business owner and personal historian Rita Visser is creating "footprints of people's hearts" to be cherished by her clients.

She started the company Momentos Canada because of her passion to tell people's stories. This resulted in her making keepsake books with family history, photos, and quotes which people can keep and pass on to future generations.

The book also acts as a way to share their history with other members of the family.

"People want to know who their grandfather's first love was. Or people might have an uncle who has a character trait that we can relate to, that we can use to discover ourselves," Visser said.

Visser said in today's society people are so busy and don't put the time into asking their grandparents or other relatives questions. She takes the time to interview client's family members to create a book of about 70 pages which tells a story about someone they care about.

"So many people have said to me over the years, 'Oh, I wish I would have taken the time, but it's too late.' Or, 'Oh I wish I would have sat down with my grandmother when I thought about it.'"

Visser said when she started Momentos Canada a month and a half ago she got her first client right away. Visser said that first client had lost many people this year and wanted to create something which

was meaningful.

"I interviewed her mother and her aunt and it was a really beautiful experience together."

From start to finish the process takes about 60 hours of work. Visser meets with clients and their family members to provide a checklist of what she needs from them. This includes certain types of photos and interview questions, so they can prepare for when Visser meets with them again.

Visser said the interview day usually takes about three to four hours.

"I transcribe it word for word. I cry and I laugh. It is a wonderful experience."

Visser said the finished product can be ready within about three weeks.

The whole experience, including interviews, the book, and audio recording costs \$1,200. She said the price might change depending on length or if someone wants additional copies.

"You are getting somebody's life story. I feel like people deserve that tribute while they are here."

Visser is also working on creating documentaries called bio- you for people. Right now she is putting together a production team and hopes to launch this aspect of momentos soon.

For more information and to contact Visser visit [mymomentos.ca](http://mymomentos.ca) or email [lifestories@mymomentos.ca](mailto:lifestories@mymomentos.ca).

[Malienberg@postmedia.com](mailto:Malienberg@postmedia.com)



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Owner of Momentos Canada and personal historian Rita Visser talks about creating a personal history book for clients.

# New police HQ a 'gem': Chief

**RAY SPITERI**  
Postmedia Network

### Efficient and synergetic

Those are two common words used by Niagara Regional Police officials during a media tour of the new \$65-million headquarters in Niagara Falls last Friday.

"It looks big, glamorous and we've heard some people refer to it as the Taj Mahal, it's not, it's very efficient," said Chief Jeff McGuire, adding the 210,000-square-foot facility was long overdue.

"I think the Region should be very proud of what they've done. Our employees, it's a huge boost to them. Ideally, in a perfect world what we'd be able to do is give you this tour and then give you the tour of where they're coming from."

\*Those buildings, ... they were due to be replaced 10 or 15 years ago.

"It will be a gem for the Region, it'll be a gem for policing."

Construction of the new headquarters began in 2013 and is expected to be completed within the next few weeks.

It will replace two existing facilities: the police headquarters on James Street in St. Catharines and the Niagara Falls detachment on Morrison Street.

The new three-story complex is located off Valley Way and was

built on eight acres of land near the Ontario Provincial Police station in a high-profile location, visible from Highway 420.

The new headquarters will house about 600 of the NRP's 1,100 uniform and civilian members. There will be 415 parking spaces and, for the first time, many units will be working under the same roof.

Inspector Richard Frayne said the NRP is moving into the new facility in nine phases, starting with the Niagara Falls patrol unit.

McGuire said the facility should be operational just after Labour Day.

"There's a great mixture of functionality, security and a welcoming environment for the community," said Deputy Chief Joe Matthews.

"We didn't build a fortress, we built ... additional security ... but it's not visible and with the amount of natural light, especially in the main lobby, we're really proud of the fact that we've created a welcoming environment that we'll be able to share with the community because it's their building."

"I am confident that what we've got is one of the premier police facilities in North America."

Kenneth Gansel, vice-chairman of the police services board, said the board is "extremely impressed" with the project.



Continued on page A26



PHOTOS BY MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Regional Police Inspector Richard Frayne in the lobby of the new NRP headquarters in Niagara Falls. The Niagara Regional Police Service hosted a media tour of the new headquarters on Friday. Located at 5700 Valley Way in Niagara Falls, the new building will house about 600 of the NRP's 1,100 uniform and civilian members. There will be 415 parking spaces and for the first time, many units will be working under the same roof. The 210,000-square-foot complex, built on eight acres of land near the Ontario Provincial Police station will replace two existing facilities, the police headquarters on James Street in St. Catharines and the Niagara Falls detachment on Morrison Street.



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# Cutting out hospital cuts

Continued from page A14

"He said that more than once," Forster said, "and he had his staff confirm that by nodding their heads. He said, 'Isn't that right?' to his group. Clearly, this is an investigative process."

Asked for an explanation, the Ministry of Health issued a statement from Hoskins regarding the meeting.

"We would like to reiterate our platform commitment of building a new Niagara hospital at the previously approved site, but as we go through this process of planning in the region our government is committed to finding ways to maintain access to health-care services for residents of Welland and the surrounding area," said the statement attributed to the health minister.

Hoskins also thanked Campion and other south Niagara representatives "for a productive meeting last week and a continuing dialogue about access to health-care services in Welland."

"I understand the importance of access and sustainability of health care in Welland," Hoskins said in the e-mail.

"I know the local LHIN is in the midst of the reviewing the master program submission from Niagara Health which includes plans for services in Welland."

He said the NHS has undertaken extensive community engagement throughout its planning process, and he's "confident that NH will continue to engage the community of Welland as it refines its plans for local services."

"Niagara Health, the local LHIN and my ministry will continue to work together to ensure appropriate and accessible services are available to the citizens of the Niagara region," Hoskins said.

Asked if the NHS was concerned about any impact on plans for area hospitals, an NHS spokesman referred reporters to [www.niagarahhealth.on.ca/en/planning-our-future](http://www.niagarahhealth.on.ca/en/planning-our-future).

As a plan is in development, "our hospital sites will continue to provide services as they do today across Niagara," the NHS says on its website.



Gates



Forster

**“**  
We would like to reiterate our platform commitment of building a new Niagara hospital at the previously approved site, but as we go through this process of planning in the region our government is committed to finding ways to maintain access to health-care services for residents of Welland and the surrounding area.”

Ministry of Health

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# HQ has state-of-the-art 911 system

Continued from page A23

"It may not look as though certain things in the building have a synergy of trying to make things more efficient, but we're moving to a central lockup, we're moving to central property," he

said.

"All of these is an efficiency in time and in employees' time and moving stuff around and dealing with prisoners.

"This is a building for the commu-

nity. This isn't a fortress of iron gates and barbed wire."

Gansel noted when visitors walk in, they'll see a community room which will also be the police services board boardroom.

"It can be used for victim services meetings, it can be used for other community groups that are related to police involvement."

He said the facility has a state-of-the-art 911 and communications centre, which is scheduled to go live in mid to late September.

Gansel said the facility's "extremely efficient lock up" including protective glass where prisoners in the temporary 24-hour holding cells can't see out of one side.

"It creates an atmosphere where you don't have so much prisoner yelling and screaming and it creates calm in a probably semi-hostile environment."

During the tour, Frayne said the complex has 43 cells that can hold 53 prisoners.

The cells don't have bars and the toilets are separated by a privacy wall.

For safety reasons, cell benches are heated so officers don't have to provide inmates with blankets.

The flow of water in the cell is controlled from the outside by officers, who, for example, can flush the toilet.

The building has been designed to have a large number of windows to allow not just for natural light, but also to maximize sight lines throughout the building.

Near the entrance, there is a self-reporting kiosk, where visitors can file their own reports, or fill out requests for information.

There are 500 lockers for officers, but also evidence lockers, which are protected by card and code technology.

Near the cell-block area are rooms where officers can administer breathalyzers.

There is a forensic services area where high-tech examinations can be done.

In addition to a police dispatch centre, officials said they're excited about a real-time operations centre, which they hope to expand in the near future to take advantage of live video technology.

"Once a police facility opens, the doors will never close. I liken it to a hospital," said Matthews.

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MIKE DUBATISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

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